



Houston **Bikeway** Program

Bikeway News

Summer 2004

Volume 2, Issue 2

Teens Teach Teens & More

A Safety Mentor Program kicked off at Lee High School with rave reviews and success. To increase the number of qualified bike safety trainers and develop leadership at the teen level, the Houston Police Bicycle Administration developed a training course to prepare high school students to teach bike and pedestrian safety.

The course includes components in traffic law, safety activities for children and bike handling skills. The course provides 3 hours of class instruction and 2 hours of hands-on practice and learning.

The goal is to prepare teens to lead by example. The younger children appreciate teen instructors and follow their lead.

The trained Safety Mentors immediately put their knowledge into practice. They participated in the 2004 Children's Festival. They manned the Children's Safety Zone booth and taught kids and parents about walking and cycling safely. Over 12 trained students participated and together accrued 16 hours of community service. Over

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Photo by John Eixeman

Safety Mentor Program graduates teach young bike riders helmet fitting and rules of the road at the 2004 Children's Festival. Lee High School program graduates give back to the community when they volunteer to earn community service hours.

More Bike Trails

Ten new trail projects are expected to be ready for construction by June 2005.

In response to Mayor Bill White's commitment to bring more trails to Houston, the Houston Bikeway Program plans to prepare more projects for construction by the Texas Department of Transportation.

Once construction is completed, the trails are turned over to the City for maintenance by the Houston

Parks and Recreation Department.

The projects range from park trails to bayou trails and rails-to-trails that increase Houston's bikeway

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Riding to Work

When Peter Wang won the Bike to Work Day drawing's grand prize we hoped he'd put the folding bike to good use.

"I rode all over downtown on the folding bike today, from Allen Center to Christ Church Cathedral. Got all kinds of looks and positive remarks about it," he told us. "It's a very useful bike. And no one minds me bringing it into the office building or the elevator, even without the bag."

Then we wanted to know more. Here's what we learned.

How does cycling fit into your commute?

"I am a Professional Geoscientist (P.G.), and I commute to two different client sites. If I am going Downtown, I ride my bike 10 miles from suburban Copperfield to the West Little York Park & Ride and then take the #216 bus into town. If I'm going to my Gessner Road assignment, I ride from Copperfield to the Memorial City area (17 miles one way)."



The folding bike fits snug-as-a-bug in Peter's trunk so he's always ready to ride.



Peter Wang rides his folding bike from Bike2Save. Peter won the Bike to Work Day grand prize!

Photo by Alex Wang

What have been your benefits over time?

"Fitness, money savings, and surprisingly, there is not much of a time penalty due to cycling. Houston & Harris County roads and streets are so congested at peak hours that a bike in a bike lane, shoulder, or on the sidewalk in a residential neighborhood can keep up with cars creeping along in gridlock."

Anything you'd like to add?

"Use a rear-view mirror on your helmet or eyeglasses. Wear fluorescent, reflective clothing. Use bright blinking lights both front and rear on your bike. And smile."

What do you do to get ready for work?

"I use unscented baby wipes to clean-up prior to work. I keep clothing at work, and have it laundered within walking distance of the office."

What's good about cycling vs. other modes of transportation?

"I really save on vehicle depreciation, maintenance, and fuel, probably equivalent to \$10 per day. I get a workout without spending additional money or time at a health club."

How did you get started?

"I got started by test-riding the routes to work on the weekends, and convincing myself that it was do-able, and that I wasn't going to have an accident."

Packing Tips

- Choose knits and synthetics to avoid wrinkles.
- Fold and wrap your clothes around a towel to keep wrinkles down.
- Fill a small spritzer bottle with Witch Hazel to freshen up and reduce odor.
- Keep a basic suit and shoes at work and change shirts or tops.
- Ask for shower facilities--you may already have one.
- Pack toiletries in baggies--lighten your load.

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network by more than 20 miles.

The projects consist of 10-foot wide trails that connect to existing bikeways improving connectivity of the overall bikeway network or creating connections to other trails.

The West Houston trail will connect the bike lanes on Enclave and run along Eldridge to Buffalo Bayou. From the bayou, it will run north along Langham Creek and connect on the south side of I-10 to a new Harris County trail that crosses under the freeway and connects to Terry Hershey Park.

The TMC Holly Hall Trail connects to the existing Ardmore bike route and ends at Reliant Stadium. Riders can also connect to the Cambridge bike lanes and ride into the Texas Medical Center off this trail.

An extension to the Herman Brown Park Trail in east Houston will add more connectivity to the park trail from Crystalwood and Autumnwood with a bike/pedestrian bridge connection across Hunting Bayou.

West Brays West is a bayou trail that runs along Brays Bayou. It starts



Ride your bike to Hobby Center and Tranquility Park downtown.



Photo by L. Andre

Visit the Julia Ideson Building and admire the architectural details inside and out. Walk across the courtyard and visit the Houston Public Library. Bike racks are available.

just outside the 610 Loop and ends north of Bissonnet. The trail allows a connection to the bike route along Braesmont and provides future opportunities to connect to our upcoming Keegans Bayou Trail.

The Halls Bayou Trail provides connections to Tidwell Park and Forest Brook High School. The trail runs from Hirsch to Bretshire Drive.

The MKT and the Columbia Tap Rails-to-Trails projects will be built on abandoned railroads to create linear parks with multi-use trails for walking and cycling. The MKT Trail runs along the Heights area, from Nicholson to Lawrence Park. The trail also runs along 7th Street to Spring, following the railroad right-of-way. This trail will connect to the Houston Heritage Corridor West Trail at Studewood.

The Columbia Tap Rail-to-Trail provides a lengthy greenscape from Dixie Drive to Polk Street. This trail provides connectivity to Herman Park, Brays Bayou Trails, Texas Southern University, the Alabama and McGowen bike routes and the Polk Street bike lane. Future efforts off of Polk Street will extend the

Columbia Union Station segment of the trail into town. Downtown visitors and Minute Maid Park sports fans will be able to ride their bike on designated bikeways.

The Houston Heritage Corridor West connects to the MKT Rails-to-Trails project and reaches to University of Houston Downtown (UHD) along White Oak Bayou. This project provides bikeway access to Stude Park and Woodlawn Park.

The Houston Heritage Corridor East Segment I connects UHD to McKee Street and the bike route into downtown as well as the Runnels and Commerce Street connections to the East End.

Finally, the Buffalo Bayou Heritage Trail North will complete a connection on the north bank of the bayou from North York to Jensen. Look for more projects to become ready for construction in 2006.

For more information on these projects, visit: www.houstonbikeways.org and click BIKEWAYS.



Photo by Roger Smith

Houston Mayor Bill White accepts the "Official Mayor's Bike" from members of the Houston Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee on Bike to Work Day while Mayor Pro-Tem Carol Alvarado, Texas State Senator Rodney Ellis, and City Controller Annise Parker stand by ready to test the official bicycle after their bike ride to City Hall.

Bike to Work 2004

On Friday, May 21, 2004, the City of Houston Bikeway Program once again hosted *Bike to Work Day* and over 18 organizations participated. Rider counts were based on actual registered riders for the Corporate Challenge. Many more commuters hopped on their bike and headed to work on their own in this year's synergistic ride across the city.

Rides included short and long distance commutes like the 3-mile ride to City Hall, the 28-mile ride to Westchase District, the 24-mile ride to Eldridge from midtown and the 25-mile ride to Bush Intercontinental Airport. New and seasoned riders took the opportunity to celebrate the national event by riding their bicycle to work.

For more information visit:
www.houstonbikeways.org, EVENTS.

"Teens Teach Tens"...Continued from page 1.

2,600 people learned safety.

The Safety Mentors also taught kids about bike and pedestrian safety at Benevaidez Elementary School in the Gulfton area. They provided a structured course with hands-on activities over two days. Fifteen Safety Mentors reached 475 elementary students and accrued 8 hours of community service.

The Houston Police Bicycle Administration has trained 30 teens this year. With the guidance of trained police officers, the students also learn to develop their own curriculum in a team environment. And they participate in the development of other educational material such as videos and presentations. After completing their training, their instructors invite the graduates to volunteer at scheduled safety events.

Want to participate in the Safety Mentor Program? Contact Officer Jack Hanagriff at (713) 247-4514.

Handbook

Look for more information on our upcoming *Bike Safety Handbook*. With the handbook you'll learn about Houston's bikeways, rules of the road and safety tips to help you plan a fun, safe and enjoyable ride.



Photo by Roger Smith

New Map

The *Houston Bikeway Network Map* will be updated to include new bikeways since it was first published in May 2002. The map will also include points of interest to help you plan your trip.



Photo by Roger Smith

Need A Rack?

More bike racks this year! Want a FREE bike rack for public access (employees, students, visitors, etc.)? Contact us at (713) 837-0003 or visit www.houstonbikeways.org, and click BICYCLE PARKING.

City of Houston Bikeway Program

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